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TECK AND ITS DUCHY.

The announcement of the engagement of Prince Edward of Wales to the Princess May of Teck, and the melancholy fact of his death since, drew attention to the duchy from which the Princess's father derives his title.

It has been often a matter of surprise to the writer how very little English people visit some of the most interesting scenery in Germany, through and past which they whirl in express trains on their way to the Alps. It is true the Alps are giants and supreme in beauty. The snow and ice exercise a magnetic influence on such as are hurrying for a short holiday among the mountains away from the drudgery of office and the smoke of a capital. But there are others who have time on their hands and who saunter on their way; yet these are content to follow the beaten route and stay where the guide-book tells them there is a good hotel and a fine view. Such persons are perhaps ill disposed to venture on new ground; but there are others to whom new ground is attractive, and to such we would suggest an expedition that will halt short of the Alps—almost within sight of them, and visit the Rauhe Alb, a singular limestone and volcanic plateau between the Neckar and the Danube.

The district is interesting to the geologist, for the Jurassic limestone has been penetrated and metamorphosed by volcanic vents; the flora is interesting; this region, moreover, has been a cradle of crowned heads. Here is Hohenzollern, the ancestral home of the imperial German family; here is Hohenstaufen, whence issued the splendid imperial Swabian house that held the crown of Charles the Great till its extinction in Conradin. And here also is Teck, whence the fair Princess draws her title, who, in all human probability, will be one day Queen of England. Moreover, the valleys are most quaint and beautiful; and the little towns and villages with their russet-tiled roofs teem with picturesque subjects for the pencil and brush. The Jura limestone makes a great crescent with its horns to the north, and in the basin thus formed flow the Neckar and the Main. The limestone range springs out of the Black Forest chain; the Danube rises in it; then, after running east, it curves up into Franconia, and dies away into the Main Valley, between Bamberg and Baireuth. This half-moon of limestone forms a plateau, with the long slope towards the south and east, and the abrupt face towards the basin it encloses. The plateau is in itself barren and bald; the rain that falls on it is at once absorbed, and goes to fill vast subterranean reservoirs that decant into the streams at the mountain roots. The valleys torn in the limestone are wildly beautiful, the rocks assuming the most strange and picturesque shapes; and the bottoms are occupied by cherry and pear and apple orchards; or by meadows rich with grass, watered by the deep limpid streams that well out of the flanks of the mountains.

The Swabian Jura, that leads into the Franconian Jura to the east, is, in fact, a continuation of the Swiss Jura. The geologic formation is the same. Fire and water have combined to give a peculiar character to the portion of the Jura which is in Swabia, for not only have the torrents rent the sides of the mountain terrace in all directions, but the central fire of the earth has sought a vent there, and has thrown up a multitude of mud volcanoes, now quiescent indeed, but bearing unmistakable evidence of their origin. Thus the plateau of limestone is broken by a number of conical heights, of which the Rechberg rises to the height of 2316 feet, and is crowned by a little pilgrimage church. The Hohenstaufen (2237) is another of these singular cones, the summit occupied by the ruins of the castle of Barbarossa. Another, again, is Hohenzollern (2840), surmounted by a marvellous crown of towers and battlements, a modern restoration of a medieval castle, the nursery of the present imperial house of Germany. The geologic formation consists of the dark lias, the lowest of the rocks that at all shows; then the brown oolite, and above that the white Jura limestone.

Nothing can be conceived more dreary than the plateau, with its white road glaring in the midday sun, the miserable starved barley-fields on each side of it, and the cottages whitewashed till they hurt the eye—in the blaze of the summer sun. But the contrast, the moment we pass into the valleys, is the more charming, and the views from the high points, such as Hohenstaufen or Teck, are of peculiar beauty, especially at sunset, when the golden orb has sunk behind the purple-domed heights of the Black Forest. Or, again, looking south, to see the marvellous panorama of the Swiss and Bavarian Alps before one, ghost-like, their silver peaks alone visible, their bases lost in ethereal blue.

The castle of Teck lies on a peak of the Rauhe or Swabian Alb, that runs out from the main mass above the village of Owen in the Lauter Valley. The valley is walled to the west by a singular spur of limestone, or rather peninsula, connected with the main range by a narrow neck, that has at some prehistoric period been cut through by a fosse and a bank thrown up, so that it was made an almost inaccessible camp of refuge in time of war. The valley watered by the Lauter is of singular beauty; it is held to be the most lovely in the whole district. In June it is a sea of flowers, from the fruit-trees that occupy it—plums, apples, cherries, pears, damsons—and the stately old walnut trees are certain to attract admiration. Vines are grown on the slopes of the hills. Unhappily, a vineyard is not so picturesque as one would have fain wished it, so we will say no more about them.

The nearest station is Kirchheim, on a branch line from that connecting Stuttgart and Ulm. From Kirchheim a good road leads to Owen, about five miles distant, and when there, we are at the foot of the heights of 'the Teck.' This is a peak of limestone, connected with the main mass by a neck of rock, and it has a volcanic hill thrown up to the north of it, connected with it by another neck. From the platform of the old castle the eye looks down some twelve hundred feet into the valley below over the precipices of limestone. This old ducal residence, this eagle nest of a noble family, is surrounded with basaltic elevations, that stand as watchmen about it. Across the green meadows and glittering thread of the Lauter rise precipitously the great crags to the west, that form the plateau out of which rises another fortress, the Hohenneuffen. The view is most impressive; the conical Achalm shooting up above Reutlingen, capped with the towers of a venerable castle, stands to the west. The Rechberg, with its little chapel high up in the clouds, is visible to the west; Hohenstaufen, Stuifen, the Rosenstein, and other points, form a coronet of volcanic cones surrounding Teck on the horizon. And far away in the west lie the dark masses of the Black Forest. Below, the plain, with its clusters of brown-tiled houses in hamlets and towns, with the spires of churches, and here and there an old tower of an enclosing wall, rising out of the richest foliage and the most smiling pastures, forms a picture of as great a charm in its own way as the distant prospect.

The castle of Teck must at one time have been very extensive, if we may judge by the remains. Who built it is unknown. In 1152 it was pawned by Bertold of Zähringen to the Emperor Frederick I.; but it was redeemed shortly after, and it formed the nucleus of the estates of the family of Zähringen in this part of Swabia. In 1525, when the peasants rose in arms against the feudal lords, this castle, like almost every other in Swabia, fell into their hands, and was burnt. However, in 1557 a chapel was still in use in the midst of the ruins, and some attempt was made in 1564 to convert the remains of the castle into a great breeding-place for horses and cattle, and a cheese and butter manufactory. It was hence that the breed of cattle that goes by the name of Teck was raised, a breed held still in esteem. In 1736, Duke Charles Alexander of Würtemberg considered it advisable to erect here a fortress after the prevailing fashion; but on his death the works were abandoned.

The Teck family was founded by Adalbert, one of the Zähringen stock, a faithful companion of Henry VI. He died in 1197. One of the members was Bertold, Bishop of Strassburg in 1223, and one of the best bishops of that see. Conrad III. received several votes of the electors to the German crown after the death of Rudolf of Hapsburg. He died in 1242. Owing to the German custom of subdividing all estates among the children equally, the Teck family was greatly reduced in wealth and power; and in 1384, Frederick IX. fell into difficulties; but was assisted by Frederick, Elector of Bavaria, and Eberhard, Duke of Würtemberg. His son Ulric rode to the Council of Constance at the head of two dozen horsemen. He died in Italy in 1432. Ludwig IX. became an Augustinian friar, and was given the patriarchate of Aquileia. He died of the plague at Basle, and was buried there, the last of his race. The embarrassments of the family had been the advantage of their neighbours; the Dukes of Würtemberg had managed to gradually absorb most of the estates, either by purchasing them outright, or by lending money on some of the manors, which the Teck Dukes were unable to redeem. As now the race had come to an end, the Duke of Würtemberg obtained a grant from the Emperor Maximilian I. in 1493 to assume the title of Duke of Teck and to quarter the Teck arms. So it remained till 1806. The title of Dukes of Teck has now passed to a line collateral to that of the kings of Würtemberg, and is borne by the son of Duke Alexander of Würtemberg by his wife, the Countess Claudine of Rhédey, who was created Countess of Hohenstein by the Emperor Francis I.

Just under the castle of Teck is a cave called the Cavern of Sibylla. In it at one time lived a certain Sibylla, who was the mother of three bold sons who carved out their fortune with their sword, and built themselves the daring tower of Wielandstein on a precipitous needle of rock a little farther up the valley. For long these three brothers lived in the closest friendship: then—all three fell in love with the same

woman, and their affection towards each other was turned into deadly hatred. They fought each other, and, according to the belief of the superstitious, at dead of night about the ruins may be heard the cries and clash of arms of the brothers, who are condemned to fight till doomsday. And then at night, from out of her cave issues the mother, and travels in a coach of flame from the Teck to Wielandstein, to endeavour to bring her sons to peace. And it is said that a certain strip along the valley where the leaves hang on the trees for a fortnight longer than elsewhere, and where the fruit is always sweeter than elsewhere, and the grapes yield a more fiery wine, marks the course along which the Lady Sibylla rolls nightly in her coach of fire.

There are a good many legends connected with the neighbourhood.

Duke Lutzman of Teck married Elizabeth, Countess of Freiburg about 1300. A witch warned her that she would die by lightning; accordingly, she was in deadly fear whenever a storm broke. After having consulted many learned scholars, one gave her a charm she was to repeat whenever a cloud passed over her head. This gave her some rest. However, she always bade her ladies in waiting look well at the sky and report to her if they saw a cloud that seemed to threaten. One day there was a great feast in the castle at Teck. Before she entered the banqueting hall, she said to her maid: 'Go forth and search the sky if all be clear.' The girl went outside, and looked in every direction. The sky was quite clear except for a tiny fleecy cloud that came up with the wind from the Black Forest. She went in and told the Duchess that there was no cloud to be seen. So the lady sat down at table. During the banquet, the little cloud gathered more vapour and spread over the sky. Suddenly there was an explosion. The lightning fell and struck the Duchess dead as she sat at table by her lord. Such is the story. As, however, she seems to have been alive in 1336, she must have used her charm pretty well for a good number of years of her married life. She and her husband were buried in the monastery church of Oberndorf, to which they had been benefactors. Most of the family were, however, buried at Owen, a little town dominated by the castle of Teck, and numbering about two thousand inhabitants. The chapel in which were the tombs of thirteen of the Dukes is, however, destroyed, and only one monument remains. The parish church is gone, the nave much earlier than the choir. A good number of old pictures, removed from the castle of Teck before it fell into complete ruin, are preserved in the town-hall.

The town held to the Swabian league in the sixteenth century, and stoutly resisted Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg, who twice laid siege to it. The women armed themselves with hayforks, and charged the men-at-arms and drove them from the gates. In reward for the prowess of the little town, it was granted special privileges by the Emperor.

The whole valley of the Lauter is rich with picturesque objects, and is full of interest. It was clearly at one time a perfect hive of knightly families, for almost every height is crowned with the remains of a castle. The valley is about twelve miles long, and ends at Gutenberg, that lies somewhat overshadowed by the mountain walls in their very lap, near the source of the Lauter, that bursts forth from a grotto in the face of a cleft. A little way up the mountain side is a cavern, consisting of several chambers, that has never been thoroughly explored. In this, tradition says, sits a white lady with face cold and dead as the moon—so cold, that he who looks on her feels a chill strike to his heart. There she sits winter and summer, waiting her release; and that will not be till some good Christian shall venture to approach her and, without showing signs of fear, shall kiss her icicle-cold and colourless lips.

THE IVORY GATE.*

By WALTER BESANT.

CHAPTER II.—IN THE OFFICE.

'I'LL take in your ladyship's name. There is no one with him at this moment.—Oh yes, my lady,' Checkley smiled superior. 'We are always busy. We have been busy in this office for fifty years and more.—But I am sure he'll see you. Take a chair, my lady. Allow me.'

Checkley, the old clerk, had other and younger clerks with him; but he kept in his own hands the duty, or the privilege, of going to the private room of the chief. He was sixty-seven when last we saw him. Therefore, he was now seventy-five; a little more bent in the shoulders, a little more feeble; otherwise unaltered. In age we either shrivel or we swell. Those live the longest who shrivel; and those who shrivel presently reach a point when they cease to shrink any more till they reach the ninetieth year. Checkley was bowed and bent and lean: his face was lined multitudinously: his cheeks were shrunken: but not more so than eight years before. He wrote down the name of the caller—Lady Dering—on a square piece of paper, and opened the door with an affectation of extreme care not to disturb the chief's nerves by a sharp turn of the handle, stepped in as if it was most important that no one should be able to peep into the room, and closed the door softly behind him. Immediately he reappeared, and held the door wide open, inviting the lady to step in. She was young; of good stature and figure, extremely handsome in face; of what is called the classical type, and very richly dressed. Her carriage might have been seen, on looking out of the window, waiting in the square.

'Lady Dering, sir,' said Checkley. Then he swiftly vanished, closing the door softly behind him.

'I am glad to see you, Hilda.' The old lawyer rose, tall and commanding, and bowed, offering his hand with a stately and old-fashioned courtesy which made ladies condone his unmarried condition. 'Why have you called this morning?

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You are not come on any business, I trust. Business with ladies who have wealthy husbands generally means trouble of some kind. You are not, for instance, in debt with your dressmaker?'

'No—no. Sir Samuel does not allow of any difficulties or awkwardness of that kind. It is not about myself that I am here, but about my sister, Elsie.'

'Yes? What about her? Sit down, and let me hear.'

'Well, you know, Elsie has always been a trouble to us on account of her headstrong and wilful ways. She will not look on things from a reasonable point of view. You know that my mother is not rich, as I have learned to consider rich, though of course she has enough for a simple life and a man-servant and a one-horse brougham. Do you know,' she added pensively, 'I have often found it difficult not to repine at a Providence which removes a father when he was beginning so well and actually on the high-road to a great fortune.'

'It is certainly difficult to understand the wisdom of these disappointments and disasters. We must accept, Hilda, what we cannot escape or explain.'

'Yes—and my mother had nothing but a poor thousand a year!—though I am sure that she has greatly bettered her circumstances by her transactions in the City. Well—I have done all I can, by precept and by example, to turn my sister's mind into the right direction. Mr Dering'—by long habit Hilda still called her guardian, now her brother-in-law, by his surname—'you would hardly believe the folly that Elsie talks about money.'

'Perhaps because she has none. Those who have no property do not understand it. Young people do not know what it means or what it commands. And whether they have it or not, young people do not know what the acquisition of property means—the industry, the watchfulness, the carefulness, the self-denial. So Elsie talks folly about money—well, well'—he smiled indulgently—'we shall see.'

'It is not only that she talks, but she acts. Mr Dering, we are in despair about her. You know the Rodings?'

'Roding Brothers? Everybody knows Roding Brothers.'

'Algy Roding, the eldest son of the senior partner—enormously rich—is gone—quite gone—foolish about Elsie. He has been at me a dozen times about her. He has called at the house to see her. He cares nothing at all about her having no money. She refuses even to hear his name mentioned. Between ourselves, he has not been, I believe, a very steady young man; but of course he would settle down; we could entirely trust to a wife's influence in that respect: the past could easily be forgotten—in fact, Elsie need never know it: and the position would be splendid. Even mine would not compare with it.'

'Why does she object to the man?'

'Says he is an ugly little snob. There is a becoming spirit for a girl to receive so rich a lover! But that is not all. She might have him if she chose, snob or not, but she prefers one of your clerks—actually, Mr Dering, one of your clerks.'

'I have learned something of this from your mother. She is engaged, I am told, to young Austin, one of my managing clerks.'

'Whose income is two hundred pounds a year. Oh! think of it! She refuses a man with ten thousand a year at the very least, and wants to marry a man with two hundred.'

'I suppose they do not propose to marry on this—this pittance—this two hundred a year?'

'They are engaged: she refuses to break it off: he has no money to buy a partnership: he must therefore continue a clerk on two hundred.'

'Managing clerks get more, sometimes; but, to be sure, the position is not good, and the income must always be small.'

'My mother will not allow the man in the house: Elsie goes out to meet him: oh, it is most irregular. I should be ashamed for Sir Samuel to know it. She actually goes out of the house every evening, and they walk about the square garden or in the Park till dark. It is exactly like a housemaid going out to meet her young man.'

'It does seem an unusual course; but I am no judge of what is becoming to a young lady.'

'Well—she needn't go on like a housemaid,' said her sister. 'Of course the position of things at home is strained, and I don't know what may happen at any moment. Elsie says that she shall be twenty-one next week, and that she means to act on her own judgment. She even talks of setting up a studio somewhere and painting portraits for money. That is a pleasant thing for me to contemplate. My own sister earning her own living by painting!'

'How do you think I can interfere in the matter? Lovers' quarrels or lovers' difficulties are not made or settled in this room.'

'Mr Dering, there is no one in the world of whom she is afraid, except yourself. There is no one of whose opinion she thinks so much. Will you see her? Will you talk with her? Will you admonish her?'

'Why, Hilda, it so happens that I have already invited her to call upon me on her birthday, when she ceases to be my ward. I will talk to her if you please. Perhaps you may be satisfied with the result of my conversation.'

'I shall—I am sure I shall.'

'Let me understand. You desire that your sister shall marry a man who, if he is not already rich, should be at least on the high-road to wealth. You cannot force her to accept even the richest young man in London unless she likes him, can you?'

'No. Certainly not. And we can hardly expect her to marry, as I did myself, a man whose wealth is already established. Unless she would take Algy Roding.'

'Very good. But he must have a certain income, so as to ensure the means of an establishment conducted at a certain level.'

'Yes. She need not live in Palace Gardens, but she ought to be able to live—say in Pembridge Square.'

'Quite so. I suppose, with an income of

fifteen hundred or so to begin with. If I make her understand so much, you will be satisfied?'

'Perfectly.—My dear Mr Dering, I really believe you have got the very young man up your sleeve. But how will you persuade her to give up the present intruder?'

'I promise nothing, Hilda—I promise nothing. I will do my best, however.'

Hilda rose and swept back her dress.

'I feel an immense sense of relief,' she said. 'The dear child's happiness is all I desire. Perhaps if you were to dismiss the young man immediately, with ignominy, and were to refuse him a written character on the ground of trying to win the affections of a girl infinitely above him in station, it might produce a good effect on Elsie—showing what you think of it—as well as an excellent lesson for himself and his friends. There is no romance about a cast-off clerk. Will you think of this, Mr Dering? The mere threat of such a thing might make him ready to give her up; and it might make her inclined for his own sake to send him about his business.'

'I will think of it, Hilda.—By the way, will you and my brother dine with me on Monday, unless you are engaged? We can talk over this little affair then at leisure.'

'With pleasure. We are only engaged for the evening. Now I won't keep you any longer.—Good-bye.'

She walked away, smiling graciously on the clerks in the outer office, and descended the stairs to the carriage, which waited below.

Mr Dering returned to his papers. He was not changed in the eight years since the stormy interview with this young lady's brother: his small whiskers were a little whiter: his iron-gray hair was unchanged: his lips were as firm and his nostrils as sharp, his eyes as keen as then.

The room looked out pleasantly upon the garden of New Square, where the sunshine lay warm upon the trees with their early summer leaves. Sunshine or rain, all the year round, the solicitor sat in his high-backed chair before his great table. He sat there this morning working steadily until he had got through what he was about. Then he looked at his watch. It was past two o'clock. He touched a bell on the table, and his old clerk came in.

Though he was the same age as his master, Checkley looked a great deal older. He was bald, save for a small white patch over each ear; he was bent, and his hands trembled. His expression was sharp, foxy, and suspicious. He stood in the unmistakable attitude of a servant, hands hanging in readiness, head a little bent.

'The clerks are all gone, I suppose?' said Mr Dering.

'All gone. All they think about when they come in the morning is how soon they will get away. As for any pride in their work they haven't got it.'

'Let them go.—Checkley, I have wanted to speak to you for some time.'

'Anything the matter?' The old clerk spoke with the familiarity of long service which permits the expression of opinions.

'The time has come, Checkley, when we must make a change.'

'A change? Why—I do my work as well as ever I did—better than any of the younger men. A change?'

'The change will not affect you.'

'It must be for you then. Surely you're never going to retire!'

'No—I mean to hold on as long as I can. That will only be for a year or two at most. I am seventy-five, Checkley.'

'What of that? So am I. You don't find me grumbling about my work, do you? Besides, you eat hearty. Your health is good.'

'Yes, my health is good. But I am troubled of late, Checkley—I am troubled about my memory.'

'So is many a younger man,' returned the clerk, stoutly.

'Sometimes I cannot remember in the morning what I was doing the evening before.'

'That's nothing. Nothing at all.'

'Yesterday, I looked at my watch, and found that I had been unconscious for three hours.'

'You were asleep. I came in and saw you sound asleep.' It was not true, but the clerk's intentions were good.

'To go asleep in the morning argues a certain decay of strength. Yet I believe that I get through the work as well as ever. The clients do not drop off, Checkley. There are no signs of mistrust—eh? No suspicion of failing powers?'

'They think more of you than ever.'

'I believe they do, Checkley.'

'Everybody says you are the top of the profession.'

'I believe I am, Checkley—I believe I am. Certainly, I am the oldest. Nevertheless, seventy-five is a great age to be continuing work. Things can't last much longer.'

'Some men go on to eighty, and even ninety.'

'A few—a few only.' The lawyer sighed. 'One may hope, but must not build upon the chance of such merciful prolongation. The older I grow, Checkley, the more I enjoy life, especially the only thing that has ever made life happy for me—this work. I cling to it'—he spread his hands over the papers—'I cling to it. I cannot bear to think of leaving it.'

'That—and your savings,' echoed the clerk.

'It seems as if I should be content to go on for a hundred years more at the work of which I am never tired. And I must leave it before long—in a year—two years—who knows? Life is miserably short—one has no time for half the things one would like to do. Well'—he heaved a deep sigh—'let us work while we can. However, it is better to climb down than to be pulled down or shot down. I am going to make preparations, Checkley, for the end.'

'What preparations? You're not going to send for the minister, are you?'

'No. Not that kind of preparation. Nor for the doctor either. Nor for a lawyer to make my will. All those things are duly attended to. I have resolved, Checkley, upon taking a partner.'

'You? Take a partner? You? At your time of life?'

'I am going to take a partner. And you are the first person who has been told of my intention. Keep it a secret for the moment.'

'Take a partner? Divide your beautiful income by two?'

'Yes, Checkley. I am going to give a share in that beautiful income to a young man.'

'What can a partner do for you that I can't do? Don't I know the whole of the office work? Is there any partner in the world who can draw up a conveyance better than me?'

'You are very useful, Checkley, as you always have been. But you are not a partner, and you never can be.'

'I know that very well. But what's the good of a partner at all?'

'If I have a partner, he will have his own room, and he won't interfere with you. There's no occasion for you to be jealous.'

'As for jealous—well—after more than sixty years' work in this office, it would seem hard to be turned out by some new-comer. But what I say is—what is the good of a partner?'

'The chief good is that the House will be carried on. It is a hundred and twenty years old. I confess I do not like the thought of its coming to an end when I disappear. That will be to me the most important advantage to be gained by taking a partner. The next advantage will be that I can turn over to him a quantity of work. And thirdly, he will bring young blood and new connections. My mind is quite made up, Checkley. I am going to take a partner.'

'Have you found one yet?'

'I have. But I am not going to tell you who he is till the right time comes.'

Checkley grumbled inaudibly.

'If I had been less busy,' Mr Dering went on, 'I might have married, and had sons of my own to put into the House. But somehow, being very much occupied always, and never thinking about such things, I let the time pass by. I was never, even as a young man, greatly attracted to love or to young women. Their charms, such as they are, seem to me to depend upon nothing but a single garment.'

'Take away their frocks,' said Checkley, 'and what are they? All alike—all alike. I've been married myself—women are expensive frauds.'

'Well—things being as they are, Checkley, I am going to take a partner.'

'You'll do as you like,' said his servant. 'Mark my words, however; you've got ten years more of work in you yet—and all through these ten years you'll regret having a partner. Out of every hundred pounds his share will have to come. Think of that!'

'It is eight years, I remember,' Mr Dering went on, 'since first I thought of taking a partner. Eight years—and for much the same reason as now. I found my memory going. There were gaps in it—days, or bits of days, which I could not recollect. I was greatly terrified. The man whom I first thought of for partner was that young Arundel, now'——

'Who forged your name. Lucky you didn't have him.'

'Who ran away in a rage because certain circumstances seemed to connect him with the crime.'

'Seemed? Did connect him.'

'Then the symptoms disappeared. Now they have returned, as I told you. I have always regretted the loss of young Arundel. He was clever and a quick worker.'

'He was a forger,' said the clerk, stoutly.—'Is there anything more I can do for you?'

'Nothing; thank you.'

'Then I'll go. On Saturday afternoon I collect my little rents. Not much—in your way of thinking. A good deal to me. I hope you'll like your partner when you do get him. I hope I shan't live to see him the master here and you knuckling under. I hope I shan't see him driving away the clients.'

'I hope you will not see any of these distressing consequences, Checkley.—Good-day.'

The old clerk went away, shutting the outer door after him. Then the lawyer was the sole occupant of the rooms. He was also the sole occupant of the whole house and perhaps of the whole Square. It was three o'clock.

He sat leaning back in his chair, looking through the open window upon the trees in the Square garden. Presently there fell upon his face a curious change. It was as if the whole of the intelligence was taken out of it: his eyes gazed steadily into space with no expression whatever in them: the lips slightly parted, his head fell back: the soul and spirit of the man had gone out of him, leaving a machine which breathed.

The watch in his pocket ticked audibly: there was no other sound in the room—the old man sat quite motionless.

Four o'clock struck from the Clock Tower in the High Court of Justice, from St Clement's Church, from Westminster, from half-a-dozen clocks which could be heard in the quiet of the Saturday afternoon. But Mr Dering heard nothing.

Still he sat in his place with idle hands, and a face like a mask for lack of thought.

The clocks struck five.

He neither moved nor spoke.

The clocks struck six—seven—eight.

The shades of evening began to gather in the corners of the room as the sun sank lower towards his setting. At twilight in the summer there is never anybody to fear—man, woman, or cat—in the chambers, and at that hour the mice come out. They do not eat parchment or foolscap or red tape, but they eat the luncheon crumbs. Mr Checkley, for instance, always brought his dinner in a paper parcel in his coat-tail pocket, and ate it when so disposed, sprinkling crumbs lavishly—the only lavishment of which he was ever guilty—on the floor. Junior clerks brought buns and biscuits, or even apples, which they devoured furtively. Mr Dering himself took his luncheon in his own room—leaving crumbs. There was plenty for a small colony of mice. They came out, therefore, as usual; they stopped at sight of a man, an unwonted man, in a chair. But he moved not: he was asleep: he was dead: they ran without fear all about the rooms.

It was past nine, when the chambers were as dark as at this season of the year they ever are, that Mr Dering returned to consciousness.

He sat up, staring about him. The room was dark. He looked at his watch. Half-past nine. 'What is this?' he asked. 'Have I been asleep for seven hours? Seven hours? I was not asleep when Checkley went away. Why did I fall asleep? I feel as if I had been somewhere—doing something. What? I cannot remember. This strange sensation comes oftener. It is time that I should take a partner before something

worse happens. I am old—I am old.' He rose and walked across the room erect and with firm step. 'I am old and worn out and spent. Time to give up the keys—old and spent.'

(To be continued.)

FLUORINE.

THE French chemist, M. Moissan, has compelled that extraordinary substance, Fluorine, to expose reluctantly to view nearly the whole of its secrets, and has published his discoveries in the October number of the *Annales de Chimie et de Physique*. For years the element completely baffled scientific investigation. Its energy and power of combination with other bodies was so intense, that nothing could induce it to forsake its union with them and appear *in propriâ personâ*. Its hydrogen compound was discovered by Schwankhardt, a chemist of Nürnberg, as long ago as 1670, who first observed that the gas given off by a mixture of fluor-spar and oil of vitriol etched glass. All the figures on thermometers and barometers are now etched by this process. The glass is covered with a thin coat of white wax; and when all the necessary marks have been made by a steel point, the instrument is laid on a long leaden trough filled with the fuming mixture, and the gas eats into the glass wherever the wax has been removed.

In 1771, just one hundred years afterwards, the celebrated Scheele, to whom, among other things, we owe the vivid arsenical green which bears his name, and which, fortunately, is a much less frequent constituent of wall-paper than it used to be, contributed a work on Fluor-spar to the Memoirs of the Stockholm Academy, in which he stated that it was composed of lime and a new acid, named by him fluoric acid, which produced the etching on glass. This fluor-spar is one of our most beautiful minerals, and is variously known under the names of Blue John and Chlorophane, being found in considerable quantities both in Derbyshire and Cornwall. It possesses a glassy lustre, is more or less transparent, sometimes colourless, and perfectly so; but is, as a rule, beautifully tinted, presenting every variety of the purest and most exquisite shades of yellow, green, blue, and red. It crystallises in the cubical system. The crystals are large, and very frequently occur in the most remarkable and charming complications—an octahedron of one colour being in the middle of a cube of another, and so on. Muscalonga Lake, in Jefferson county, New York, was once a noted locality for these wonderful crystals. On its borders were found huge cubes of a greenish tinge, and sometimes more than a foot through, imbedded in granular limestone. Unlike most minerals, the colour is not produced by traces of foreign substances or by organic impurities, but seems to depend entirely on their physical structure. Connected with this is another curious phenomenon: when heated to just below redness, the crystals exhibit a vivid phosphorescence; and still more curiously, the light emitted, which is of various tints, is perfectly independent of the external colour. If, however, the heat be carried too far, the phosphorescent power is lost, but may be restored to some extent by an electric current.

Scheele did not succeed in isolating the elementary constituents of his new acid; but it is really marvellous how accurate all his work was, when we come to consider that he was working at the time in Scharenberg's apothecary's shop with antiquated and primitive apparatus, and very little even of that. Three years before, Margraaf had attempted the analysis of fluor-spar, but without arriving at any result. It was not, indeed, until about fifty years afterwards that the composition of Scheele's fluoric acid was definitely fixed. Gay-Lussac and Thénard strove hard to prove, though unsuccessfully, that it contained oxygen; and it was Ampère who finally assigned the compound to its proper place in chemistry and named the element itself Phtor, or the destroyer, on account of its violent action. It was renamed Fluorine, as it had been first discovered in fluor-spar; and the hydrogen compound—Scheele's fluoric acid—was called Hydrofluoric Acid.

Humphry Davy, in 1809 and 1813, tried, but without success, to isolate fluorine; and many earnest and gifted workers, both in our own country and abroad, followed on similar and different lines, only to meet with failure. It is probable that many of them did succeed in obtaining it for an instant in the free state, but it immediately attacked the glass or metal of the containing vessel and formed a fresh combination. Gore did a great deal of valuable work on it, trying to liberate it from its silver salt. He also made several investigations on the hydrofluoric acid just mentioned and other compounds. Messrs Thorpe and Hambly have done much useful service in determining the physical constants of the same body, from which they were able to calculate the vapour density of fluorine itself; as has also M. Dumas by another method. Even in the end, the resources of chemistry alone proved unequal to the task, and it was by passing a strong current of electricity from twenty-six or twenty-eight Bunsen batteries through hydrofluoric acid in which was dissolved a metallic compound to increase the conductivity, that M. Moissan, in 1887, was enabled to first obtain the element fluorine in a state of purity. Since then, he has considerably enlarged and improved his apparatus, which is now capable of turning out nearly four litres of the gas per hour. Every part of it is constructed of platinum with stoppers of fluor-spar, through which the wires conveying the current pass. The purifying vessels, tubes, and connections are also of the same metal, fastened together by nuts and flanges with lead-washers, which when acted on by the escaping gas, expand and seal any leak. As the price of platinum is two-thirds that of gold, the pecuniary sacrifices involved in the research are by no means insignificant. The U-shaped tube

in which the generation takes place is kept at a temperature of −9° Fahrenheit by the evaporation of a very volatile organic liquid contained in an outer vessel, and the first member of the purifying series at −58° Fahrenheit by the same means; the greatest care having to be taken that even the vapour of the refrigerating liquid does not enter any part of the apparatus, or else violent explosions occur.

Fluorine gas is of a yellow colour, with a smell resembling bleaching-powder. It has not been liquefied, and still remains gaseous at −140° Fahrenheit. Every precaution has to be taken in studying its action on other bodies, both on account of its dangerously irritating action on the eyes and mucous membrane of the operator; and its marvellous and wonderful energy, far exceeding that of anything hitherto discovered. There is hardly a gas, liquid or solid, that it does not attack, usually with the greatest violence; in fact, its mere contact with any other substance is nearly always signalised by the sudden evolution of intense heat and light and fierce detonations. It almost realises the fondest dreams of the alchemists, and might fitly be their long-sought Liquor Alkahest or universal solvent, for even dull inert flint takes fire instantly it is exposed to the vapour, and the whole mass becomes luminous with a grand incandescence. As a supporter of combustion it leaves oxygen far behind. Lampblack bursts immediately into brilliant flame and gets red-hot in a current of fluorine gas; and charcoal is made to give an interesting exhibition of its porosity by first filling its interstices with the gas and then burning spontaneously with sparkling scintillations. The diamond, however, is able to withstand its action even at high temperatures. Silicon, a crystalline substance closely resembling the diamond, gives a very beautiful reaction, showers of brilliant spangles being scattered in all directions from the white-hot crystals, which are finally melted. As they do not fuse under 2190° Fahrenheit, one can gain some idea of the immense energy set free during the combination. Both lime and chalk under the same circumstances give a most gorgeous incandescence. Phosphorus, as one might expect, does not fail to illustrate its powerful affinity when exposed to the gas. Prussian-blue reacts very beautifully, and burns with a pink flame. A crystal of iodine placed in a current of the gas gives a pale flame, and a heavy liquid distils over, which etches glass, and hisses like red-hot iron when thrown into water.

All the metals, with the exception of gold and platinum, are rapidly attacked by fluorine, and even these in less degree. Iron combines in the cold with splendid energy, becoming white-hot; and rust, when heated, behaves in a similar manner. Magnesium, aluminium, and many other metals, burn with great brilliancy, the combustion of the last named being especially beautiful. Zinc, if slightly warmed, bursts into gorgeous luminosity, accompanied by bright white flames so intense as to be almost blinding. Mercury is attacked violently in the cold. M. Moissan attempted on one occasion to pass a quantity of the gas into a tube standing over mercury protected by an inert fluid; but when inclining the tube, the two elements came into contact, there was a violent detonation, and the containing vessels were broken to atoms. Copper, on the other hand, combines very quietly even when heated. This is rather curious, as, judging from its analogy in most points to lead and mercury, one would anticipate quite the opposite result. Silver requires some persuasion before it will take up fluorine, and very little action occurs until 212° Fahrenheit—the boiling-point of water—is reached. At a red-heat, however, incandescence is observed, the product melts, and on cooling, has a sheen like satin. Gold, on heating, forms a volatile fluoride, which, when carried to a slightly higher temperature, splits up again into the metal and the gas.

The behaviour of liquids with fluorine is usually very energetic, and experiments have to be conducted with much caution. If the gas be passed into the middle of alcohol, the result is very striking: the whole mass is violently agitated, and each bubble as it appears becomes incandescent in the middle of the liquid, finally vanishing in flame. A very similar reaction occurs with chloroform. If a few drops of this last liquid are shaken up in a tube full of fluorine gas, a violent explosion takes place, and the tube is reduced to fragments. An ingenious little apparatus was constructed for the study of the interaction of other gases with fluorine. It consisted of a fair-sized platinum tube provided with the necessary small tubes for the entrance and exit of the gases, and having at each end a window of fluor-spar, through which the phenomena occurring within could be observed. Hydrogen combines fiercely with fluorine even in the dark and at −9° Fahrenheit, the issuing stream burning with a blue flame bordered with red. In every other known case, heat or some form of extraneous energy is required to induce the combination of elementary gases. Some watchfulness was necessary to prevent back-pressure accumulating in the apparatus during these different experiments, as, if it did occur, fluorine was driven up the hydrogen limb of the generating tube, a violent detonation followed, and everything was shattered. Oxygen is one of the few bodies that appear to have no affinity for fluorine. Even when they are heated together up to 932° Fahrenheit, nothing is observed to take place between them. If a few drops of water are placed on the floor of the experimenting tube and fluorine gas is passed in, a dark fog is seen surrounding each drop, which presently clears and resolves itself into a characteristic blue vapour, apparently more than an inch in thickness, and which is found to be that most interesting condensed form of oxygen, ozone, in a state of great density.

Such are a few of the most beautiful and interesting results of M. Moissan's researches, and even a layman cannot fail to be struck by the marvellous and unprecedented manifestations of energy which the element seems capable of. The next problem for the consideration of chemists is, what reason can be assigned for this wonderful display of force? Why should these infinitesimal atoms rush together with such sound and fury? Is the heat and light evolved due to loss of rotatory motion, as if a whirring fly-wheel were brought suddenly to rest? or

what? It seems probable from recent discoveries in electrical science, which have a very close bearing on the subject, that we shall not remain much longer in ignorance.

SUNSTRUCK.*

CHAPTER XIII.

BURNS bent down and tried to raise Josephine to her feet, that he might lead her to a chair; but she resisted.

'No,' she said in a low passionate voice; 'you have not cast me down. It is he who has done this.'

'Yes,' said Greville sternly. 'It is I who have done this, by my charge; and it is I who should raise you up, and humble myself to you, child, but not yet—not yet.'

He turned and walked slowly to the door, to stand there with his back to them, waiting; and Burns followed almost directly, to turn before he passed out, and meet Josephine's eyes fixed upon his with a grateful look.

'It is impossible, Captain Greville,' he said in a quick angry whisper, as they approached Manton's room; but his host made no reply, merely going on before him with bowed head and a look of agony in his countenance which seemed to have aged him by ten years. They entered the room very gently; but Renée heard them, and started up to look piteously in her father's eyes; while Manton opened his, and gazed from one to the other questioningly, as if asking for help and relief.

Greville felt his head and hands, and then bent lower over him. 'Still in so much pain?' he whispered.

Manton made no answer but a smile, which told all; and the captain wiped the clammy dew from his temples.

'Can't—can't you do something?' came in a hoarse whisper.

'I am doing something,' said the captain; 'but we must wait. When did you drink that water?'

'Some time toward morning, I think—or was it morning?' said the sufferer faintly. 'I don't think I touched it in the night, and yet I seem to fancy I heard the glass strike against the vessel.'

'Yes: in the night,' said Burns quickly. 'I heard you.'

'No,' said Manton, after a few minutes' pause, during which he had struggled hard to bear a terrible paroxysm of pain—'no; I did not touch it in the night. I am sure it was morning.'

'He is wrong,' said Burns in a whisper to Greville. 'I distinctly heard him touch the bottle and glass.'

Greville looked from one to the other curiously, and then walked to the window, and stood there thinking whether there was anything he could do to help his guest.

As he left the bedside, Renée let her head sink again in despair, for she could gather no hope from the face before her; and once more a terrible silence fell upon the group; while Burns, after looking intently at the pain-drawn countenance of his friend, crossed on tiptoe to speak to Greville, who was leaning out of the window, and seemed to be trying to reach something below him amongst the flowers which covered the top of the veranda and climbed up round the jalousies.

The next moment he was standing upright examining a kind of chaplet or necklace formed of the bright red seeds of the snake-wood.

'Have you seen this before?' he whispered to Burns.

'That? Yes. I have seen our nurse, 'Miramis, wearing it constantly. Why?'

'The creeper is broken and torn down about the window,' said Greville hurriedly; 'and the person who did it seems to have dropped the necklace on the veranda top. What should you say it meant?'

'Some one must have climbed out.'

'Or climbed up,' said Greville excitedly.—'Come down with me. We can do nothing here.'

Puzzled and wondering, Burns followed him into the room where Josephine crouched upon the matting in the same attitude as that in which they had left her.

'Josephine, my child,' said Greville so sharply that the girl started up and looked at him wildly, 'whose is this?'

She took the necklace he held out, and Greville watched her closely as she replied: 'It belongs to 'Miramis.'

'When did you see it last?'

'Last night, I think, when she came to my window.'

'Ah!' cried Greville. 'She came to your window?—When?'

'It was when I went up to bed.'

'Why?—Tell me the truth.'

'I am telling you the truth,' said the girl coldly. 'She often comes to my window of a night. It is nonsense; but she thinks she is a wise woman, and she makes me tell her my troubles, and promises me that they shall all depart.'

'Hah!' said Greville sharply; 'and you told her of your trouble last night?'

Josephine was silent for a few moments.

'Why do you not speak, girl?' said Greville sternly.

'I was thinking,' said Josephine slowly. 'I was in so much trouble that I hardly know what I said. She told me, though, that my trouble should not last.'

'You foolish girl!' cried the captain angrily. 'I believe you innocent, child; but it is through you that this horror has been caused.'

'I—I—don't understand.'

'Then I will not explain.—Burns, come with me.'

The young man gazed at him wonderingly, and then followed him out into the garden, where the rough palm stem which supported the veranda beneath Manton's window showed traces such as would have been made by one who had climbed up. The piece of trunk was rugged with the great dry footstalks of the old palm-leaves, which had been left so as to form a support to the creeper that had been planted to run up, so that an ascent was easy enough, but not without

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disturbing the clustering stems and leafage of a beautiful Bougainvillea, which was in several places broken and torn away.

'There is no doubt here,' said Burns sharply. 'Some one has climbed up by this post.'

'Yes,' replied Greville, as he bent down to examine the creeper; 'and look here; some of this has been clumsily thrust back. Here is a piece tucked in that has been broken right off.'

There was a hard, set look in Greville's face as he turned from the veranda.

'What are you going to do?' said Burns, who was startled by the fierce look in his companion's eyes.

'Do, boy? What would you do to the reptile you have fostered—to the half-savage creature you have fed and tended for years, when it has turned and stung you to the heart? Hunt it out and crush it.—Ah!' he added after a pause, 'it is not the first. Such a creature is not fit to live.'

He hurried Burns on to the densely wooded part where the cottages of the blacks were clustered. As they approached one of the best of the cottages, superior to the rest, and with the garden better kept, Greville uttered an ejaculation. 'I might have known,' he said. 'I was mad not to have had it destroyed.'

'What—what is it?' cried Burns.

'There it is,' said Greville bitterly, as he pointed to a good-sized tree rising behind the cottage—'the manchineel.'

Burns looked eagerly at the tree with its small apple-like fruit.

'A deadly Euphorbia, teeming with virulent poison.'

He was about to enter the garden, when a black woman came toward them from one of the cottages with a curious shrinking look.

'Where is Semiramis?' said Greville sternly.

'Don't know, massah. Tink she go to de house.'

'No: we have come from there. She is hiding.'

He went on, followed by Burns.

'I have been a father to these people,' said Greville angrily, 'and yet there is no one I can trust. That woman lies to me at once. They say anything to escape blame.'

He thrust open the door of the cabin and entered.

'Not here,' he said fiercely. 'But she shall be found. They will all try and hide her.'

'From love?'

'From hate. There is not a black in the island who will not help her, for fear that she should work some spell—in other words, drug food or the water, out of revenge.'

He hurried Burns to where the men and women were at work in his fields, and everywhere there was a shake of the head in answer to his questions. No one had seen 'Miramis that morning; and at last, faint with the heat, Greville turned back.

Burns followed him, and at the gate they were met by one of the black labourers.

'Yes: what is it?' cried Greville.

'Massah look for 'Miramis, dey say. She gone.'

'Gone?—Gone where?'

The man pointed to the sea.

''Rutus go fishin' dis mawnin', sah; and 'Miramis come down and shout to man wiv a boat; and he come ashore and talk, talk; and den 'Miramis get in de boat, and de man lif' in um big bundle and set de sail and go right away.'

'Is this true?' cried Greville, catching the man by the throat.

'Oh 'ss, massah, all de troof. 'Miramis gone right away.'

'Ah!—and why?'

''Cause a buckra massah very ill.'

'That will do. Go!' said Greville; and the man, who was trembling in every limb, hurried away.

'Her confession of her guilt,' said the captain slowly.

'Then you will have her followed and punished for the crime?' said Burns.

'If he dies—yes. If I save him—no. The chances are that I should never have her found. The woman has the reputation of being a follower of Obeah; and, as I have told you, such as she are supposed to bring death to those who are their enemies, and the people fear them. No: we shall never see her more.'

Greville whispered to Burns to stay where he was while he went back to the room where Josephine was seated alone; and ten minutes passed before he returned, to sign to the young man to follow him to the bedroom, where, to all appearance, the minutes of Manton's life were drawing to a close.

CHAPTER XIV.

After a short stay, they left the room once more and went out into the garden.

'I cannot bear it, Burns,' cried Greville in agony. 'It will kill her too. I must do something.'

He stopped short, with his brow rugged and teeth set, thinking intently. Then, with a look of rage, he turned suddenly upon his companion.

'It was a lie,' he said—'I ought to have known—a beggarly, transparent invention; but it tricked me for the time.'

'I do not understand you, sir.'

'That black scoundrel, Brutus: she sent him with that tale to put me off the scent. She has not left the island, but is hiding in the woods.'

'But the man'——

'I tell you they will all lie, and invent childish stories to save one another from punishment. I know them by heart. Come to the plantation again. I'll have the truth from them, or'——

At that moment a low, deep-mouthed baying rose from beyond the house. 'Ah!' said Greville, '*he* never lies! Come quickly. Now I shall know the truth.'

Burns followed him as he hurried to the far side of the house, where Renée's great heavy-chested Cuban bloodhound was chained, and which now rose up on its hind-legs and pawed and fought to get at its master.

'Down, Nep!—down, Nep!' he cried; and the dog crouched at once while his chain was slipped from his collar.

'But surely you are not going to hunt the woman, sir, with that savage beast?'

'I am not going to hunt a woman, sir, but a vile murderer. You need not be alarmed: a word from me is enough to restrain that dog.'

Burns was silent; and at a word, the dog bounded before them on their way back to the woman's cabin, about which several women were grouped as they approached; but all fled in horror at the sight of the dog.

Greville laughed bitterly. 'You see,' he said. 'One would think I hunted my people with this hound.—Here, Nep! In with you, boy!'

He strode right into the cabin, and after a few moments' consideration, snatched up a gown lying on the bed.

'Here, boy, here!' he cried, shaking the cotton dress; and the dog made a plunge, buried his head in it, snuffed about, and then barked.

Greville snatched up other articles of attire which lay about as if their owner had just made a change; and the dog tore at them, seized them in his powerful jaws, and shook and turned them over, growling and snuffling about.

'That will do now—steady!'

Greville took a leather thong from his pocket, fastened it to the dog's collar and led him to the door. 'Now,' he said, 'you will soon see.'

The dog tried to bound off, but settled down directly with its nose close to the ground, and led them in and out to one of the cottages, where a woman within set up a wild cry; but the dog came out again directly, and made for another, threading the narrow pathway quickly, and dashing through the low doorway at once.

'Hah!' cried Greville; 'that's good.'

The dog ran round the room, came out, and, nose down, made straight for the plantation, where a group of labourers stood to watch them approach; and as the dog paid no heed to them, but went on along a narrow path by a patch of cane-ground, they one by one left their work and followed at a distance.

'Another proof,' said Greville in a low voice; 'they tell me plainly that she has taken to the forest. They will follow us to see her taken.—Look at Nep.'

Burns was already watching the sagacious beast, which was straining hard at the thong as, with nose down, he followed a narrow winding track right in among the trees beyond the captain's clearings; and, forgetting the heat in his excitement, Burns hurried on behind in the dark overgrown track, one which was rarely used.

'Where does this lead to?' said Burns at last.

'To a kind of meeting-house in the forest. I never interfere with them in this. It is of no use. Tired?'

'No, I think not,' said Burns, who seemed to be endued with fresh strength. For the next hour neither spoke, but with the dog tugging silently at the thong, followed the path in and out among the trees, till, all at once a large roughly thatched hut blocked further progress, the path going in under the low doorway, and Burns's heart leapt to his mouth as the dog uttered a growl and bounded upon something dimly seen in the windowless shelter at the farther end.

'Hah!' ejaculated Greville as the dog seized what proved to be a gaily coloured handkerchief. 'We are on the right track.—Good dog!' he continued, patting the animal and taking the kerchief from his jaws.—'Seek her, then.'

The dog made a plunge forward through a screened opening at the back out into the forest again; but the path had ceased. There were, though faintly visible, footsteps on the moist earth, and the scent was strong enough for the dog to go on as rapidly as he could, with the shade growing less deep, the trees more open, and it was evident now that they were ascending a steep slope, but diagonally.

'She has made for the mountain,' said Greville quietly.

Few words were spoken in their breathless ascent, but from time to time the scent seemed so fresh, and the dog tugged so that Greville grew excited.

'Keep a lookout forward,' he said. 'We must be near her now. I want to run her down before she can reach the woods again.'

Blue sky above them, the glistening rocks at their feet, and, beyond the glorious green trees below, there was the dazzling sea; but they had no eyes for the beauty of the scene, but toiled panting on behind the dog, which now led them into quite a chaos of piled-up masses of lava, for they had reached a gap in the edge of the crater, and Greville uttered a cry of satisfaction as he drew Burns's attention to a curl of smoke rising up some little distance ahead.

'There she is,' he whispered.—'Quiet, Nep!—She has not heard us. Keep level with me now,' he continued; 'and as soon as we are close up, seize her. I'll hold the dog.'

It was a time of breathless interest as they drew nearer the softly rising vapour which betrayed the woman's halting-place, and, making every effort not to tread on the loose stones which promised to rattle beneath their feet, they gained the mouth of a hollow, out of which the smoke rose; but, to their surprise, the dog turned off to their left, and suddenly threw up its head, whined angrily, and snapped at a tiny curl of smoke which rose from between its feet.

'Sulphur!' cried Greville. 'Pah!'

Burns had already stepped aside, for he had inhaled the choking fumes which they could now see were escaping from cracks in the loose volcanic soil, upon which the vapour was being condensed in a pale yellow efflorescence.

'I thought we had run her down,' said Greville. 'Proofs that the old volcano is not quite dead.—Go on then, boy. We shall overtake her soon. She must have been here before, perhaps to fetch sulphur or to perform some mumbo-jumbo tricks to frighten the weak fools.'

For the dog was tugging to get on, and, after dragging them in and out amongst the huge vesiculated masses of pumice, bare of all vegetation and glistening in the sunshine, it suddenly made a dash downward for about a hundred feet, turned in at a broad cavernous rift in the mountain side, and then drew back, threw up its head, and uttered a deep-mouthed bay.

'Run to earth!' cried Greville excitedly. 'In with you, Burns, and bring her out. No: she is my servant. Hold the dog. I'll go.'

Burns, with his heart beating heavily, thrust his hand beneath Nep's collar, and held him fast.

This rift led into quite a little cavern, whose

interior was lit up by the sun; and there, not twenty feet from them, lay the figure of the black woman, apparently sleeping after her toilsome climb.

Greville pressed forward into the cavern, and staggered back, choking violently.

'Good heavens!' he ejaculated. 'I could not breathe. Burns!—that woman!'

He said no more, but turned his head to the sharply blowing breeze, took a deep inhalation, and then plunged into the cave, and staggered out dragging after him the body of the wretched woman, till he was a few yards from the opening, where he lowered her softly down.

'Dead?' gasped Burns.

'Yes. There must have been a fresh escape of fumes,' said Greville slowly. 'There has not been a cloud about the crater for months. Poor foolish wretch! She must have staggered in there, worn out, to lie down and rest, and been overcome.—Let us get back, and send the people to fetch her down.—Look!'

Burns gazed in the direction pointed out, and saw that about a dozen of the blacks had followed them at a distance, and were standing waiting for leave to come farther.

Ten minutes later Greville and Burns were toiling down the mountain, the latter beginning to feel an exhaustion against which he could hardly fight.

It was quite dark when they reached the plantation house; and upon Greville hurrying to the sick chamber, he found that there had been apparently but little change. Manton was gazing with a fixed stare in Renée's eyes, too much prostrated now to be able to struggle against the paroxysms. But as Greville approached, he read hopeful signs in his patient's face; and a couple of hours later, he drew a long deep breath, and whispered words in Renée's ear which made her start to her feet, fling her arms about her father's neck, and burst into an hysterical fit of weeping, just as a low wailing chorus came through the open window from the direction of the cabins of the blacks, which was answered by a mournful howl and the rattle of a chain.

Semiramis had been borne down from the mountain, and was being carried to her hut.

CHAPTER XV.—CONCLUSION.

The next morning dawned with Manton plunged in a deep sleep, which lasted for nearly twenty hours, and from this he awoke weak once more as a child.

But the convalescence was one long dream of happiness, from which he seemed to be rudely awakened one day by the return of the ship and the call back to duty.

'Yes,' said Greville, as the time for parting came. 'Some day, if Renée does not change her mind.'

Two years after, she was Commander Manton's wife; and the captain accompanied her and her young husband back to England, where he had elected to end his days. For the time had come when the dreamy plantation life had begun to pall, and he had found a successor in Burns, who quitted the service upon wresting a long withheld promise from Josephine that she would be his wife.

Ten years had passed away before the young people met again, and it was in answer to a question that Josephine said: 'I was a foolish girl, and knew no better then Renée. Yes, I loved him dearly. Then in a minute my love was turned to hate, and I told that wretched woman, as I told her all my troubles then. Yes, I hated him; but I would sooner have died than caused him pain, and if he had—— There, say no more, dear; we are sisters and the past is dead.'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

It will be remembered that at the beginning of last year an exploring party started on an expedition into Central Australia, one of the objects being an exhaustive scientific survey of those blank spaces on the map which lie between latitude fifteen and thirty degrees south, an area which hitherto has been unexplored. Another object in view was to search for traces of Ludwig Leichardt, whose party started on the same errand more than forty years ago, and has not since been heard of. The present expedition has now returned from their arduous journey, after having experienced many trials and privations. At one time they travelled for thirty-four days without finding water. The natives were friendly in most cases; but it was impossible to hold communication with them, because their language was not understood. Altogether, the expedition has not resulted in any great discovery; but it has certainly corroborated the previously known fact that Central Australia is a country so exceedingly arid that it must always remain sparsely inhabited. The party consisted of ten, and every credit is due to them for risking their lives in an expedition so full of peril. We are glad to know that the medical officer of the expedition was also a photographer, so that in time we may hope to see pictures of a region previously unknown to the white man.

The proposed Antarctic expedition, about which so much was heard a few months back, and which was to start this year at the joint expense of the Australian colonies and Baron Oscar-Dickson of Sweden, will, according to all accounts, not take place, owing to the want of interest shown by the Australians in the enterprise. Sir Thomas Elder promised five thousand pounds on certain conditions, Baron Oscar undertaking to give a similar sum, or to double that amount should it be necessary; but the Australian colonies have not contributed their far smaller share, so that, although Baron Dickson had actually selected the two ships suitable for the work, the scheme appears to have fallen through. There is certainly plenty of money in Australia which would have been devoted to the enterprise had it been brought before the people in a right manner; but it seems that the scientific men who advocated the expedition were not in touch with the people generally, and owing to this circum-

stance, the matter has, we trust only for the present, fallen into abeyance.

An interesting paper was lately read before the North British Association of Gas Managers on the subject of Gas Leakage. It is well known that a heavy percentage of the gas made is lost by leakage. In clay soils the pipes naturally are sealed more securely in the ground, and the loss is not so great; but in porous soils such as gravel, the loss to the gas companies is sometimes as much as seventeen per cent. of the total output. In the paper referred to, the author of which was Mr D. Robertson of Dunoon, the chief outlets for this unaccounted-for gas were pointed out. Beyond the general leakage from the mains, loss accrued from careless connections where the supply-pipe for the houses entered the main, chiefly due to bad workmanship. It was also stated that an old wet meter might, for want of water, fail to register at least one-fourth of the gas passing through it. Street lamps, it was stated, are a certain source of loss in every town, owing to a separate service-pipe being required for each, thus multiplying the number of connections to the main. Condensation has been supposed by some to account for a large proportion of the loss; but Mr Robertson, from direct inquiry, has found that this is not the case. The reader concluded by pointing out, that although the responsibility of the gas company ended when they delivered gas into the consumer's premises, it was politic to educate the consumer into the most economical and efficient way of using the gas for lighting, heating, and cooking. This course would surely lead to a larger consumption per householder, and would thus decrease the percentage of unaccounted-for gas.

A new kind of life-belt has been brought out in Prussia. It consists of a canvas bag stuffed with reindeer hair. This hair being hollow and containing air is lighter than cork, and has indeed sufficient buoyancy to sustain a weight of twenty-two pounds of iron in water, although the bag itself weighs only one-tenth of that amount. The material can be used for stuffing mattresses, seats of chairs, sofas, or can be utilised for clothing or travelling rugs. Should these various necessaries be provided on board ship, there will be plenty of life-saving appliances at hand in case of need.

In a paper by the Principal of the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, New South Wales, it is stated that the climate and a great portion of the soil of Australia are well suited for the culture of the olive. An interesting description is given of the manner in which green olives are preserved. They are picked from the trees when full grown, but while perfectly green, and are handled as carefully as eggs, for if they are bruised, they soon become black and rotten. While green the olives contain gallic acid, and to remove the unpleasant acrid taste caused by it, they are steeped in an alkaline solution, such as lime-water or soda. When the alkali has had time to penetrate the fruit, which it does in about ten hours, they are soaked in clear water until all alkaline taste has disappeared. They are next put into brine, and are finally stored in air-tight receptacles for export.

The submarine volcano which some time ago rose up out of the sea near the island of Pantellaria has disappeared. Such volcanic phenomena are not uncommon in volcanic districts, and their sinking is more easily accounted for than their appearance, for they are mostly composed of ash and similar materials, which are quickly acted upon by the ever-moving waters around them.

A new railway brake has recently been invented which has the advantage of acting upon the rails instead of upon the wheels. The brake comprises four blocks of the usual kind, which are furnished with soft iron shoes, and these are pressed on to the rails by the action of eccentrics. Sufficient power can be transmitted to these blocks to actually raise a locomotive or railway truck from the track, if necessary. The great advantage of the new system seems to lie in the fact that the wheel is not dragged along the rail, as it is by existing brakes, an action which often causes a slight flattening of the wheel. We trust this brake will be fully tested by the authorities, in order that it may be seen whether it has other advantages over those in present use.

Every now and then a report reaches us that some unfortunate has been poisoned by means of tinned foods, and the particular food to which the disaster is generally attributed is tinned fish. It is believed that the food is contaminated by means of the tin or lead in the solder becoming soluble in the acid liquor in which the fish is preserved. It is now reported that a wholesale merchant and importer of tinned salmon at Manchester has determined to pack fish for the future in glass receptacles. A glass jar of salmon which had been sealed for twelve months was recently opened, and the contents were found in a perfectly fresh condition. We may soon hope to see salmon preserved in this manner in the English market.

An ingenious apparatus called 'a Wreck Indicator' has recently been invented by an officer of the United States navy. The contrivance consists of a copper ball about eighteen inches in diameter, which is hollow, and is securely glued to a base plate by means of soluble cement. It is intended that this apparatus should be secured to any portion of the upper works of a ship, so that, if the vessel should founder, after a certain time the soluble cement would melt, with the result that the ball would be left free to float. It would thus rise from the sunken vessel to the surface; and as it has fastened to its lower part a reel with a line attached, it will remain anchored above the surface where the wreck occurred. By this means the exact spot would be indicated where the wreck had taken place, and the number of vessels which sail from port and are never again heard of would tend to be greatly reduced.

Many householders and manufacturers in this country have occasionally been inclined to envy the inhabitants of Pennsylvania and other districts where natural-gas wells abound; for this natural gas has been an unspeakable boon to all. Not only has it represented a vast saving of expense, but it has done its work without the dirt and dust inseparable from coal-fires. But there are indications that the gas is being exhausted. Some years ago the theory was broached

that the gas was still being formed in the earth; but this theory has been given up, and the general opinion is, that certain subterranean reservoirs originally charged with the gas are now being rapidly emptied; and the reign of coal-fires must be recommenced. But the people have been so used to gas, that they are now turning their attention to its artificial production by the volatilisation of oil; and it is said that several large manufacturing establishments in certain western cities of the States are making use of the method with good results. That the system is feasible has long ago been proved in isolated districts in our own country, and it is quite possible that it will in the future be further developed.

Of all road-vehicles ever contrived by man, surely the London cab is at once the most ugly, the most uncomfortable, and the one which is worst adapted to its purpose. It is astonishing that a conveyance of this kind should not long ago have been improved upon, and it is difficult for the uninitiated to explain the reason why. We are glad to learn that the Coach and Coach-harness Makers' Company are about to hold a competition for prizes among British subjects engaged in the trade and resident in the United Kingdom. Three prizes of thirty, twenty, and ten pounds are offered by the company for the best three models of an improved four-wheeled cab suited to the traffic of London. There are also other prizes offered for various vehicles, but the one that is quoted will be of most interest to the public generally. Detailed particulars of these competitions—the drawings and models pertaining to which must be delivered by the end of April next—may be obtained of the clerk of the company at Noble Street, London.

A paper was recently read before the Shipmasters' Society by Captain Froud, the subject being the Heating of Ships and their Cargoes, and the Waste of Heat in Steamers. After detailing the different kinds of cargoes which generated heat, among which were certain minerals such as copper, antimony ores, and coal; animal matter such as wool; vegetable products like cotton, jute, flax, coffee, sugar, &c., which will all generate heat if not well dried, it was pointed out that the heat of ships depended also upon the materials of which they were constructed and on their colour. He considered that passenger ships would if painted in light tints be rendered cooler, and those carrying frozen meats and petroleum would also benefit largely. It was also pointed out that all parts of marine engines where the maintenance of heat was essential should be painted of the lightest colours, and that railway companies would effect economy by using light-coloured paints for their locomotives. With regard to ships, damp cargoes should always be avoided, and full ventilation should be maintained, especially in dry weather.

It would seem that the rocket apparatus which has been so often used with grand results on our shores will fail when too much is expected of it. In the case of a recent wreck near Dover, the rockets failed to reach the distressed ship, although several were fired by experienced hands. A rocket has nominally a range of five hundred yards; but this is necessarily curtailed when the projectile has a head-wind to contend against. It has a line to drag after it weighing forty-three pounds, and should that line be wet its weight is doubled. It is doubtful whether a more perfect rocket can be made, for the present pattern is the outcome of many experiments. Perhaps it might be replaced by some form of shot fired from a gun; but great care would be necessary in handling such an engine, in case life should be destroyed instead of preserved by it. The suggestion has been more than once made that ships should carry their own life-rockets, on the ground that in cases of shipwreck the wind is nearly always towards the shore, and the rocket would thereby have a much enlarged range.

An official Report states that the copper mines of the French Congo are likely to prove of extreme importance. At present, under native auspices they are worked in a very primitive fashion, the tools employed being of hard wood only. The ore is the beautiful green carbonate of copper known as malachite, which is procured from holes dug in the ground to a depth of about six feet. This ore is broken up, pulverised, and submitted to heat on a tray with charcoal, with the help of bellows, after which the metal is poured into sand-moulds. The entire district is said to be wonderfully rich in copper.

It is said that the use of the electric head-light for locomotives is becoming general on the railways of Indiana, and that many advantages are found in its employment. The arc-light is fed by a small dynamo worked by the engine itself at a very slight expenditure of steam. On a clear night the engine-driver can see for a mile ahead, so that if any obstruction were in his way he would have plenty of time to pull up even though he were travelling at a high speed. Collisions have already been prevented by the use of these head-lights.

A novel 'wonder of the deep' has recently been experienced by those who go down to the sea in ships. On the recent arrival of the British barque *Hesper* at San Francisco, the captain reported a strange occurrence which took place when the ship was at a distance of about seventy-five miles from the coast of Japan. A rumbling noise was suddenly heard, and the sea was agitated to such an extent that the waves broke over the deck. But the most terrible and unusual feature of the disturbance was that the water was boiling hot, and the crew had to remain in the rigging for five hours to avoid it, where they were half suffocated by the heat as well as by blasts of hot sulphurous gas which continually escaped from the ocean. We believe that this is the first recorded instance of a ship being caught in the actual embrace of a submarine volcano, for such the awful phenomenon evidently was.

The recent earthquake in Japan will probably be found to be one of the most severe ever recorded. There is little doubt that much of the terrible loss of life is due to the houses being built on exactly the same principles of construction as those which are observed in countries not subject to visitations of the kind. Again and again it has been pointed out that earthquake countries should adopt special plans of house construction, and in Japan itself much attention has been given to this subject. In the recent

earthquake, forty-one thousand houses fell, and in most cases buried or imprisoned their inhabitants, who were some of them slowly burned to death in the conflagration which followed. A house made of basket-work, could such an erection be contrived, would be the ideal residence for a country subject to earthquakes. It has also been suggested, and in some cases the idea has been carried out, that the dwelling should consist of a wooden house resting upon iron balls, so that when the dreaded shock came the edifice would merely roll to and fro upon its supports without breaking up.

An excellent paper was recently read before the Shipmasters' Society, London, by Mr William Allingham, on Ocean Meteorology. Mr Allingham urged strongly the necessity of gathering together carefully all the lessons that could be read from the aspect of sky and sea, and, so to speak, codifying them for the use of navigators. It is interesting to learn that, in the matter of sea-routes, 'the large Liverpool lines trading to New York have agreed among themselves to run their steamers on clearly defined outward and homeward routes in order to lessen the risk of collision end on between their own ships proceeding in opposite directions, to avoid fog and ice in the vicinity of the Banks of Newfoundland, and to spare the fishermen riding at anchor there.'

A HUNDRED AND THREE DAYS ON A DESERT ISLAND.

THE shipwrecked crew of the barque *Compadre*, eight hundred tons register, Captain Jones, bound from Calcutta to Talcahuano, Chili, recently arrived in New Zealand, after a series of remarkable adventures, having escaped the successive perils of fire and shipwreck, and the hardships of a prolonged sojourn on the bleak and desolate islands to the south of New Zealand, known as the Auckland Islands.

The vessel left Calcutta on the 22d of January, last year, bound for Talcahuano with a cargo of jute bags. All went well until the 16th of March, when a fire was discovered by the captain in the after-hold. The subsequent events are very well told in a clear and graphic narrative which the chief-mate, Mr F. Bates, has given of the affair. The captain, it appears, at once called all hands on deck to cope with the fire. Holes were cut in the cabin deck, and water was poured in incessantly from ten A.M. to six P.M., but without much result. Finding it impossible to extinguish the fire, the captain ordered his men to batten all down, and then shaped a course for the Benff, a harbour in the extreme south of the Middle Island of New Zealand, that being the nearest port. Before finally closing the hatches, several men tried to obtain bread from below, but were rendered insensible by the smoke, and had to be carried on deck. The attempt therefore had to be abandoned. The vessel made fair way until the night of the 18th of March, when to the peril of fire that of tempest was added. A furious westerly gale came down upon the ill-fated vessel, accompanied by terrific squalls. At seven A.M. on the 19th of March land was discovered on the starboard bow, distant about twelve miles. It was very hazy at the time, and, owing to the fearful sea, the vessel laboured heavily. One tremendous wave swept the foresail and foretopmast staysail out of the bolt ropes, burst the forecastle ports, smashed the scuttle forehatches, and swept the decks of everything movable. Worse than this, it burst in the cabin, thus giving air to the fire, which could not be prevented from breaking out, though immense quantities of water were flooded in. The men could not man the pumps, being washed away by the seas which continually broke on board.

It is almost impossible to imagine a situation of greater peril. The carpenter sounded the well and found eight feet of water in the hold. The vessel was rapidly sinking under foot, and it was quite impossible to lower the boats in such a sea. Only one hope remained, and that of the slenderest possible character. The land which had been sighted was the Auckland Islands, and the vessel was now to the windward of the North Cape. The captain therefore ordered the mainyard to be squared, and steered for the land in the hope of saving life. It must, however, have indeed seemed a forlorn hope in such an angry sea, with a rock-bound coast backed by precipitous cliffs towering hundreds of feet above the sea-level. Still, with the indomitable pluck and resolution of British seamen, those on board determined to make the best fight they could for their lives. Just before the vessel struck, oil was poured on the waters over the stern, which greatly reduced the violence of the sea; and then all hands hastened to the bow and hung on the bowsprit, waiting for the critical moment. Their coolness and prudence were rewarded with good fortune. The vessel struck with a great crash, every one making a jump for the rocks; and all got safely to land, although some were much bruised by the violence of the concussion. In ten minutes nothing of the vessel but loose wreckage was to be seen.

Although the men had safely reached land they were in a pitiable plight. The Auckland Islands in the winter are as drear and desolate a place as one can imagine. They are swept by furious tempests and almost incessant rain. They are the homes of such seabirds as love the storm; but except for the occasional visits of sealers or of a Government steamer searching for shipwrecked mariners, the islands see no trace of human life, save only, as in the present case, when shipwrecked seamen are cast upon their inhospitable shores. On several occasions the place has been the scene of disastrous wrecks. The *Invercauld*, *Grafton*, *General Grant*, and *Derry Castle* are the names of a few of the vessels which occur to the mind. In many cases the loss of life has been total and complete. In the case of the *Invercauld*, out of nineteen men who scrambled ashore, three only were rescued after twelve months of fearful suffering.

The surface of the islands for the most part is mountainous, and a great deal of it is covered either with dense bush or a wilderness of high tussock, standing in deep peat, almost equally impassable. The prospect which met the *Compadre* castaways therefore was by no means hopeful. They had of course been able to save nothing in the shape of food from the vessel, and

were barefooted and scantily clothed, each man having partially stripped, preparing for a swim for life. It so happened, however, that assistance in the shape of food and clothing was within their reach, although they were not aware of it, and only discovered the fact by a sad and curious accident, although it turned out fortunately for the bulk of them. After getting on the rocks, the whole ship's company climbed the cliffs, which, as already stated, were several hundred feet in height. They saw a mountain in the distance, and made straight for it, to get a better view of the island they were cast upon. They reached it with some difficulty, and looking round, saw a flagstaff close to the beach. They at once went towards it; but losing their way in the bush, and night coming on, they made for the nearest beach, where they found a few limpets and one little fish, which they divided into sixteen parts, one for each man. This scanty fare was greedily devoured, as they had only had one meal since the fire broke out, four days before. What stores were saved from the lazarette had been kept for the boats, and were therefore lost when the ship went to pieces. While the men were dividing their miserable meal, it was discovered that one of the seamen, named Peter Nelson, was missing. An attempt was made to find him; but the night was so dark that the attempt had to be given up. A miserable night was spent owing to the rain and snow, which fell incessantly. In the morning, they divided themselves into parties, and proceeded to search for Nelson, but with no success. In the course of their wanderings, however, they came upon a neatly-built hut, and on examining it, found that it contained a store of food and clothing. It was a depôt, established by the New Zealand Government for the relief and succour of shipwrecked seamen cast upon the islands. By a strange oversight, however, the existence of such a depôt is not mentioned in any of the shipping directories; and but for the fact of poor Nelson wandering away to his death in the bush, his comrades might never have hit upon the depôt, and, like him, might have perished of starvation.

From a record in the hut, the castaways learned that the New Zealand Government steamer *Hinemoa* had visited the islands only a week before on her periodical cruise, and they made up their minds that they would have to make a prolonged stay on the islands before there was any chance of being rescued. Consequently, they had to be very careful with the food in the depôt. There is scarcely any fish to be caught at the Aucklands; and the castaways found that the seabirds and seals, which were comparatively easy to approach at first, became so wild after a week or so of contact with human beings that it was impossible to get near them. The shipwrecked people, however, found some goats and sheep, which had been placed on the island by the New Zealand Government. Of the former they caught three, and of the latter eight. The sheep never having been shorn were covered with very long fine wool, which also proved very serviceable to the men.

It is not necessary to enter into details of the life of the castaways on the islands. They suffered a good deal of pain and discomfort from the exposure; but the Government stores preserved them from danger of absolute starvation, and they enjoyed fairly good health during their stay. On Monday the 6th of July, to their great joy, the sealing-schooner *Janet Ramsay* called at the islands; and the men having been there exactly one hundred and three days, were taken on board and brought to New Zealand. At the nautical inquiry which was held, the court, it is needless to say, adjudged that the wreck was entirely due to misadventure, and that the captain and crew had done all that was possible under the circumstances.

VANISHED DREAMS.

Beautiful stories, in shielings wild,
They told of the fairies when I was a child—
How with feet like the foam-bells, so light and fair,
They entered the dwellings of want and care;
And as morning dew melts off from the grass,
So the cloud of sorrow was sure to pass;
No blight on the crops which the fairies had blest,
For day they brought gladness, for night they brought rest.

Oh heart of my childhood! what vigils vain
Were mine as I watched for the fairy train;
But the feet of the fairies came not nigh;
No glimpse of their beautiful wings flashed by;
And the peasants said: 'Ah, they know too well
Where peace and gladness and riches dwell!
Wait—and if clouds darken over your sky,
Surely then will you see them nigh.'

Alas! for the home of our childhood days—
Its weed-choked gardens, its moss-grown ways—
I heard them tell how, one autumn night,
Over heather and moor flashed the weird corpse-light;
I heard them whisper: 'The fairies know—
O'er the homestead they love falls the shadow of woe;
The fire will be quenched, and the hearth be lone,
Ere the winter has past, or the March winds blown.'

The fires are quenched, and the hearth is lone;
Dear names are carved on the gray headstone;
Only, I think, in my heart remains
The echo of long-ago joys and pains;
The half-believed legends have passed away;
Life grew too real—they could not stay.
The earth-lights have faded—the night is drear;
But the stars of heaven were never so clear!

Mary Gorges.

*** TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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